

President Miguel Diaz-Canel laments death of renowned intellectual Marta Rojas

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Marta Rojas

Havana, Oct. 5 (RHC)-- Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel lamented the death of celebrated journalist and writer Marta Rojas of a heart attack on Sunday at the age of 93.

On his Twitter account, Diaz-Canel wrote: 'Marta Rojas is now gone, a woman of letters and of Revolution, an exceptional witness and narrator of the 'Trial of Moncada.' A Heroine of Labor of the Republic of Cuba, Marta Rojas was a journalist and writer until her last breath. Her transcendental work is part of the national

memory.'

Born in Santiago de Cuba on May 17th, 1928, Marta Rojas witnessed the events on July 26th, 1953 in eastern Cuba and the subsequent trial against then young lawyer Fidel Castro and the other revolutionaries.

Then young journalist Rojas defied a decree issued by dictator Fulgencio Batista, which banned any reports of the events at Moncada. Together with her colleague, photographer Panchito Cano, she roamed the area around the Moncada barracks, and shot photos of what they saw.

She later helped Cano sneak the photos out of the Eastern Province and into Havana, where they were eventually published on Bohemia magazine.

Rojas even managed to get into the courtroom, where the revolutionaries were being tried and took notes on Fidel Castro's famous, self-defense speech that was later known as 'La historia me absolverá' or "History will absolve me."

She later wrote the book 'El Juicio del Moncada' (The Trial of Moncada), based on those historic events in Cuba.

After the triumph of the 1959 Revolution, she worked first at Bohemia magazine, and later joined the team of journalists of the newspaper Revolución, until she joined the team of Granma newspaper since its creation on October 3, 1965.

As a reporter, Marta Rojas accompanied leader Fidel Castro on several trips across Cuba and Latin America, particularly Chile. She was the first Cuban and Latin American war correspondent in Vietnam.

As a writer, she is the author of six novels and several testimonial works.

An award-winning intellectual, Marta Rojas was awarded the José Martí Journalism Prize in 1997, the Heroine of Labor of the Republic of Cuba Distinction in 1999, the José Antonio Fernández de Castro Cultural Journalism Prize in 2004 and the Alejo Carpentier Literary Prize in 2006.

Several other Cuban and foreign personalities and institutions have expressed sorrow over Marta Rojas' death. The president of Federation of Journalists of Latin America and the Caribbean Juan Carlos Camaño sent a message to the Association of Cuban Journalists. Camaño commended her strong links with the regional organization, as well as her memorable work as a young reporter, covering Fidel Castro's trial for the assault on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks in eastern Cuba, in July of 1953.

The general secretary of the Federation of Journalists of Latin America and the Caribbean, Nelson del Castillo wrote: 'Her life is an example for the current and future generations of journalists, for her commitment to the truth and the destiny of her people.'

Precisely in 2011, Marta Rojas represented the Federation of Journalists of Latin America and the Caribbean as a juror of the prestigious Miguel de Cervantes Literary Prize -- the most important award in Spanish literature.

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